



Small Towns Newsletter

Upcoming Events

- 5/1 - Chimney Rock Bingo Night
(first Friday of every month)
- 5/2 - Old Fort Railroad Days
- 5/5 - Todd Bingo Night (first
Tuesday of every month)
- 5/15 - Todd CommUnity Dance
- 6/6 - Bakersville Troutacular
- 6/13 - Hayesville Car-B-Que
- 6/19-20 - Bakersville
Rhododendron Festival
- 7/4 - Todd Liberty Parade

In This Issue

- Welcome New Staff!
- A Word from Megan
- A Word from Janiece
- A Word from Abbie
- Cluster Gathering
- Interns
- NC STEP
- Small Town News
- Reminders

Key Websites

- [HandMade in America](#)
- [NC Rural Center - STEP](#)
- [BRNHA](#)
- [NCCDI](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

A Word from Megan



Greetings! I am so pleased to introduce myself as a new member of HandMade in America's staff. I am a native of southwest Virginia and have a degree in Urban Planning from the University of Virginia. Prior to HandMade, I worked in Virginia with Appalachian Sustainable Development where I gained experience working in the non-profit sector and in community development. In Asheville, I have worked in the green building sector where I promoted sustainability within architectural and building fields. My experiences and background will make my work with HandMade meaningful on many levels. I am thrilled to have this opportunity and look forward to visiting your towns and getting to know each of you.

Warm regards,

Welcome!

Welcome to our spring edition of the HandMade Small Towns Newsletter. We will be introducing you to our new staff members, Megan Williams, who will be assuming many of Erin's responsibilities, Janiece Meek, our new development director, and Abbie Emison who will be working with me on our Small Towns program on a part-time basis.

Our newsletter will let you know about developments with our NC STEP program, our upcoming Cluster Gathering in May at Warren Wilson College, new interns, and charrettes, as well as other events and activities happening in our communities throughout the region.

Welcome New Staff!

HandMade welcomes our newest staff member, Megan Williams, who started with us in January. Megan will be assuming some of the responsibilities Erin had and undertaking some new responsibilities with HandMade's overall operations. One of the changes you may have noticed upon calling our office, Megan is the melodious "live" voice you hear on our end of the line. Megan has moved her office to the beautiful John Gernandt desk in the reception area. Donna has relocated to a more secluded office where she can manage our financial and managerial operations with fewer interruptions. Some of you met Megan last fall when she volunteered to help us with the Cluster Gathering in Hayesville.

In addition, Janiece Meek and Abbie Emison also joined HandMade recently. Janiece is our new development director and will be working on fundraising initiatives. Abbie is working with the Small Towns Program, helping put together new materials and assisting with the upcoming Cluster Gathering.

Megan

A Word from Janiece



Janiece attended Agnes Scott College, a liberal arts women's college in Decatur, Georgia, which encourages women to "think deeply, live honorably and engage the intellectual and social challenges of their times." That's where she earned a degree in art, and it's where she began to thinking about her life in terms of creative opportunities and challenges.

After moving to Asheville in 2001 with her architect husband, Terry, she initiated a series of career adventures. Putting her art degree to good use, she and Terry opened Marie Terrel Gallery which they operated for two years. Janiece published the Critical Review, a monthly Arts Publication, authored a series of articles on 20th Century Art History, and has been a contributing writer for many local publications on a freelance basis.

Her relationship with HandMade in America began when she wrote the introduction for HandMade's Architectural Elements Sourcebook. She subsequently became Communications Director, and is now Development Director for HandMade.

Janiece loves community involvement, entertaining, gardening, cooking and baking, and taking care of her brood - Charlie and Wilber, her sweet and crazy Springer Spaniels; her big yellow cat, Leo; and Midas and Percy, the two who survived her learning curve for koi-keeping, together with all their goldfish buddies. One thing she's learned since moving to Asheville is that worrying about your life's purpose is a waste of time - just jump in and live it!

A Word from Abbie



Hello! My name is Abbie Emison and I am very excited to be helping out with HandMade's Small Towns Program. I grew up in Durham, and I am glad to be back in North Carolina after spending ten years in the Northeast going to school and helping cities and towns revitalize their downtown areas. I have a bachelor's degree in Economics and Political Science from Wellesley College and a Master in City Planning degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduating, I worked for a regional economic development organization in Connecticut, where I served as the

Director of Municipal Services for fifteen cities and towns. I am delighted to be involved with the Small Towns Program and I look forward to assisting our communities in achieving their economic development goals, as well as meeting everyone.

Cluster Gathering



Save the Date!

Be sure and mark your calendars, PDAs or other means of remembering special dates for **Wednesday, May 27, from 9:30 to 3:30 pm** at the Ransom Fellowship Hall on the campus of Warren Wilson College. Warren Wilson is located in the Swannanoa Valley, just east of Asheville, our same location for the past six years. The annual Cluster Gathering of our communities will feature you and your partners in the HandMade Small Towns Program. We encourage you to share your projects and activities in

words, graphics, photos, CDs, video . . . whatever means you choose. Let us know if you will need any equipment. We will also have display tables available. Presentations should be 15 minutes or less. We plan to set aside some specific time for you to visit and interact with other communities. One of our projects this year is working to establish resources to support site visits for our communities to visit each other.

Please remember to bring a door prize or prizes and consider "Bakersville Bob's" approach of offering prizes that encourage or require a visit to your community. This will help foster "Andrews Bob's" desire to encourage and "incentivize" more intercommunity activity and interaction.

We will send out additional information and directions in late April or May, but please mark the date and start rounding up your representatives.

Making Connections

As we recognize and celebrate the uniqueness of each of our communities, we also seek opportunities to share projects, events, and ideas with each other. To that end, we want to work towards a goal of having virtual connections that link our communities' web sites with HandMade and with each other. This will help provide a broader market area for our visitors, offering additional experiences and opportunities that no one community can offer. At the May Cluster Gathering, speak with other communities and explore how you might make a virtual connection. Please speak with Megan or Donna for assistance with web site links.

In addition to the electronic ties, we want to encourage and provide support for intercommunity visits that

allow you to experience and learn from each other. In order to facilitate this process, we are seeking to allocate some financial resources to support these visits. When we meet together in May, consider the possibilities of visiting other communities undertaking an activity or project you might like to try in your community.

Image: Cluster Gathering, May 2007.

Interns



Land Design Intern

Stephanie Pankiewicz with LandDesign's Asheville office is working with our Small Towns Program to provide several of our communities' pro bono access to their design intern from Purdue University, Andy Cole. When we sent out a message that Andy's services would be available, we quickly received requests from several communities. We proceeded on a first call, first served basis and have quickly absorbed Andy's available time in Crossnore and Mars Hill. We have received notice from DCA that

their intern has been confirmed and we will try and match up requests from the communities that have already contacted us and add others where possible. We hope to continue this relationship with LandDesign for future design assistance.

DCA Intern

Our partners at the NC Division of Community Assistance have confirmed that a summer intern will be available to assist several of our communities with design services. Andrew Campbell is a junior in Landscape Architecture at NC State School of Design. Andrew is a native of Charlotte and has experience in landscape and urban design, as well as graphic design and sustainable development practices. The internship will run from May 26 to July 31. We will try to put any unfulfilled intern requests towards the top of the list, provided the projects fit the time frame and Andrew's skills and experience. If you have a need for design assistance, please contact David to put your project on the list.

Due to the State's budget crisis, we may need to work with communities to help with mileage costs.

Image: LandDesign intern, Andy Cole.

NC STEP



Moving Forward One Step at a Time

We are working with Misty, Art and the staff at the Rural Center to finalize our contracts for this year. Our existing contracts with the eight original STEP communities will be amended to extend the ending date through 2009 and into 2010. This allows plenty of time to complete your projects. Our new STEP communities of Andrews and Old Fort will have new contracts that carry forward through 2009 and into 2010. Once we have our contracts signed and in force, we will send out a reporting schedule. The Rural Center is allowing HandMade to do uniform reporting and record keeping with both our old and new communities. In keeping with the existing policy in our signed agreements, the quarterly reports and

impact assessments are required prior to advancements or reimbursements of funds.

As with all of our projects, please take photos before, during and after completion, preferably digital at 300 dpi so we can use them in publications requiring high resolution. We look forward to having Art, Misty and perhaps others from the Rural Center join us at the Cluster Gathering in May.

Celebration!

NC STEP is hosting a Celebration and Recognition Ceremony to honor the first NC STEP communities (including HandMade's two original clusters) on **Tuesday, May 5, 2009 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm at the NC Rural Center**. Governor Purdie and several legislators will be guests at this event. We would like to have several representatives from each Cluster attend; however we recognize that it will not be possible to have every community represented. We will be able to cover expenses for this trip, but will need to limit the event to a maximum of two persons per community. Bob Hensley will make a presentation on behalf of all our communities because there is not enough time for more than one presentation from cluster groups. Geraldine, Abbie and David will be representing HandMade at the event. Please let David know if you will be available to attend as soon as possible.

Image: Rep. Mitch Gillespie, Mayor Garland Norton and Senator Joe Sam Queen at the NC STEP Kick-off in Old Fort.

Small Town News



Old Fort Design Charrette

Jay Tomlinson with the Cooperative Extension Service and the NC State School of Design



has partnered with the Rural Center to bring design charrettes to several communities throughout the State. Our newest small town, Old Fort, has been selected to receive these charrette services. Old Fort is working with Jay to set a schedule for their charrette for this spring and summer. This will be our fifth community to have a design charrette in partnership with NCSU. Previous charrettes have been held in West Jefferson, Crossnore, Marshall, and Hayesville.

Communities in the News!

The March edition of Southern City, a publication of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, included a great article featuring a number of our communities. The article, entitled "Art works as economic development," highlighted our region's success in marketing arts to enhance tourism and features several of our communities. To read the full article please click [here](#).

If you know of any communities that have been featured in publications, please let us know. We would love to celebrate and announce any and all accomplishments.

Image: Old Fort Arrowhead.

Reminders

Photos

We are always looking for photos to include in our newsletters and publications. If you have any photos you would like to share, please send them to David and Abbie.

Events

Our communities develop and produce creative, diverse and entertaining activities throughout the region. Please continue to send us your upcoming events so we can publicize them on our HandMade events calendar. We look forward to making our HandMade calendar a regional marketing opportunity.

Assessment Reports

Please remember to send your Impact Assessment Report forms and Quarterly Reports to Donna (dabranes@handmadeinamerica.org). Assessment forms can be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

In order to distribute this newsletter to as many interested parties as possible, we need your help! Please send updated email addresses for those people who would like to receive the newsletter, or simply forward on the newsletter and encourage people to click the "Join Our Mailing List" link.

I look forward to seeing you all in May at the Cluster Gathering!

Sincerely,

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